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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 1461

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, TW

SUBJECT: US CHINA POLICY: CURRENTS AND CROSS-CURRENTS
IN THE ROC'S DAILY PRESS

REF: A) TAIPEI A-23; B) TAIPEI 7447, 12/18/74

1. SUMMARY: DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1975
LOCAL PRESS REPORTING ON EVENTS RELATED TO US CHINA
POLICY HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF US/
ROC RELATIONS AND HAS PLAYED DOWN OR FINESSED LESS
FAVORABLE ITEMS. WHILE PRESS COMMENTARY HAS BEEN
MIXED, IN GENERAL THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE COMMENTARIES
HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC, STRESSING THHAT THE
MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WOULD NOT FAVOR RECOGNITION OF
THE PRC AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ROC, AND THAT THE US
HAS NOTHING TO GAIN FROM RECOGNIZING THE PRC.
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE COMMENTARY HAS TENDED TO BE LESS
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF CHINA POLICY.

2. BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE-LANGUAGE COMMENTARIES
HAVE OCCASIONALLY SUGGESTED THAT THE GROC CAN AND
SHOULD DO MORE TO INFLUENCE US PUBLIC OPINION BUT HAVE
ALSO HINTED -- ALTHOUGH LESS FREQUENTLY -- THAT THE
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ROC SHOULD NOT RELY TOO GREATLY ON OTHER COUNTRIES.

END SUMMARY.

3. DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1975 THE LOCAL PRESS HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE POSITIVE IN REPORTING ON US CHINA POLICY. RECENT STATEMENTS MADE BY US SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN, (FONG, GOLDWATER, HELMS, SCOTT, THURMOND AND ASHBROOK) BY VISITING US OFFICIALS. (CASEY AND FORMER TREASURY SECRETARY KENNEDY) AND BY VISITING US ACADEMICIANS (SEE REFAIR) THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SUPPORT FOR THE ROC HAVE ALSO RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE AS HAVE ACTIONS BY SEVERAL US STATE LEGISLATURES IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED US/ROC RELATIONS.

4. A RECENT GALLUP POLL CONTRACTED BY THE GROC TO MEASURE US ATTITUDES ON THE ROC AND US CHINA POLICY WAS ALSO GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE BUT EMPHASIZED ONLY THOSE PORTIONS OF THE POLL THAT SUGGESTED STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ROC. IN CONTRAST, THE ISSUANCE OF THE MANSFIELD REPORT ON CHINA WAS REPORTED ONLY BRIEFLY AND OMITTED ALMOST ALL SUBSTANCE OF THE REPORT.

5. THE MOST CAUTIONARY NEWS ITEMS ON THE ROC'S POLITICAL FUTURE ARE THOSE THAT REPORT RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO SUCH AS, "WE ARE FACED WITH NATIONAL CRISIS" AND THAT DURING 1975 "OUR COUNTRY MAY SUFFER THE BIGGEST SETBACK AND ENCOUNTER MORE DIFFICULTIES THAN EVER BEFORE."

6. IN CONTRAST TO NEWS REPORTING, PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE DIRECTION OF US CHINA POLICY AND PREDICTIONS ON THE OUTCOME OF PRESIDENT FORD'S UPCOMING VISIT TO THE PRC HAS BEEN MIXED. IN GENERAL, THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRESS COMMENTARIES HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC WHILE THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS HAS TENDED TO STRIKE A MORE CAUTIONARY NOTE.

7. REASONS FREQUENTLY CITED IN SUPPORT OF OPTIMISM INCLUDE: A. THE US HAS REPEATEDLY REASSURED THE ROC THAT IT WILL HONOR ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IS IN US INTERESTS TO DO SO BECAUSE THE ROC IS AN IMPORTANT LINK IN THE US LINE OF DEFENSE IN THE PACIFIC AND BECAUSE FAILURE TO HONOR ITS OBLIGATIONS WOULD CREATE DOUBTS IN THE MINDS OF OTHER US TREATY PARTNERS AND ALLIES.

B. THE RECENTLY CONDUCTED GALLUP POLL SHOWS THAT MOST AMERICANS WOULD NOT FAVOR RECOGNITION OF THE PRC AT THE

EXPENSE OF THE ROC.

C. THE US HAS NOTHING TO GAIN FROM RECOGNIZING THE PRC SINCE THERE CAN BE NO TRUE DETENTE BETWEEN THE TWO, AND THE PRC AS A RESULT OF US RECOGNITION WILL GAIN STATUS IN THE THIRD WORLD AND EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE IN ASIA.

8. REASONS FOR MORE PESSIMISTIC APPRAISALS ARE LESS SHARPLY DEFINED, MOST OFTEN APPEARING AS "A SENSE OF APPREHENSION" REGARDING US/ROC RELATIONS OR A US "DRIFT TOWARDS APPEASEMENT." WHEN REASONS ARE GIVEN, THEY CENTER AROUND THE "SUCCESSFUL BRAINWASHING" BY PEKING OF SENATOR MANSFIELD AND OTHERS VISITORS TO THE PRC OR ARE OCCASIONALLY LINKED TO DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, E.G. "ALL OF US WHO ARE THREATENED BY COMMUNISM -- AND THIS INCLUDES THE REPUBLICS OF CHINA AND KOREA AS WELL AS CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM -- ARE COMPELLED TO COPE WITH AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND US POLICY AS IT EXISTS, NOT AS WE WISH IT WAS."

9. INFREQUENTLY BUT NOT UNCOMMONLY THE PESSIMISM IS LINKED TO FORTHRIGHT CRITICISM OF THE US. ONE OF THE Milder FORMULATIONS FOR SUCH CRITICISM IS: "ALL COUNTRIES MAKE MISTAKES. THE US IS NO EXCEPTION". A HARsher FORMULATION LINKED WITH FAILURE TO SUPPORT ALLIES: "THE US TOLERATES AND APPEASES THE ENEMY WHO FOUGHT THE US IN THE PAST...AND MAKES A DEVOTED EFFORT TO CHASE THE FRIENDSHIP OF THAT ENEMY... ON THE OTHER HAND, THE US HURTS AT WILL THOSE ALLIES WHICH TRADITIONALLY ARE MOST LOYAL TO THE US."

10. SEVERAL COMMENTARIES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE GROc
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CAN AND SHOULD DO MORE TO INFLUENCE US PUBLIC OPINION AND POLICY, NOTING THAT "WE SHOULD...MAKE USE OF THE CURRENT STABLE SITUATION TO HELP THE US ACQUIRE A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHINA PROBLEM" AND THAT "IT WILL NOT HELP TO BURY OUR HEADS IN THE SAND...."

11. INTERESTINGLY, AT LEAST TWO EDITORIALS (ONE ENGLISH PRESS, ONE CHINESE PRESS) HAVE SUGGESTED THAT "THE ROC COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT THE US" AND THAT "THE SURVIVAL AND GROWTH OF A NATION MUST RELY ON ITS OWN STRUGGLE AND EFFORTS INSTEAD OF RELYING ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT."

12. SPECIFIC SPECULATION ON THE IMPACT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S UPCOMING VISIT TO THE MAINLAND HAS SO FAR BEEN

LIMITED, BUT SUCH COMMENTARY AS DOES EXIST MOST FREQUENTLY SUGGESTS THAT: A) THE PRESIDENT WILL GO TO THE PRC; B) RECOGNITION WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AT THAT TIME BECAUSE NO AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED ON THE STATUS OF THE ROC OR THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY; BUT C) THE US MAY HAVE TO OFFER SOME CONCESSIONS TO THE PRC SUCH AS MOST FAVORED NATION STATUS OR FURTHER REDUCTION OF THE US MILITARY PRESENCE IN TAIWAN. SPECULATION ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR US/ROC RELATIONS AFTER RECOGNITION IS EVEN MORE LIMITED, BUT AT LEAST ONE ARTICLE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE PRC WOULD FIND AN EXCHANGE OF EMBASSY/LIAISON STATUS OR THE CONTINUATION OF THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY UNACCEPTABLE.

13. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOTICED A SLIGHT UPTURN IN THE FREQUENCY OF COMMENTARIES ON U.S. CHINA POLICY, WE HAVE NOT DETECTED -- NOR ARE WE AWARE OF -- ANY NEW GROC PRESS GUIDELINES FOR THE HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE. OUTRIGHT CRITICISM OF THE US HAS BEEN LIMITED THUS FAR, BUT IT APPEARS THAT THE US IS NOW FAIR GAME FOR ATTACK. IF CONDITIONS IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE, WE WOULD EXPECT TO SEE AN INCREASE IN ARTICLES CRITICAL TO THE US FOR WHAT WOULD BE PERCEIVED AS ITS FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS ITS ALLIES (AN OBVIOUS CRITICAL CONCERN HERE) AND A RESULTANT MORE PESSIMISTIC

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